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FM AMEMBASSY BERN

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6405

INFO RUESHL/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY 62

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 68

RUFHAU/AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY 277

RUFHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 677

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERN 2169

SUBJ: LOCALE FOR PHASE II OF SALT

REF: STATE 143122

1. IN ACCORDANCE PARA ONE REFTEL WE DISCUSSED SUBJECT WITH SOVIET  
CHARGE MORNING AUGUST 8. DESCRIBED U S APPROACH TO SWISS AND  
SUGGESTED THAT SOVIETS SIGNAL CONFIRMATION TO SWISS GOVERNMENT IN  
BERN OR MOSCOW. SOVIETS PLEADED COMPLETE IGNORANCE AND UNDERTOOK  
TO SEEK INSTRUCTIONS.

2. IN LENGTHY SESSION WITH SWISS FONMIN OFFICIALS THIS AFTERNOON, WE BRIEFED AND EXPLAINED US LOGISTICAL NEEDS. WE CONVEYED US/ SOVIET INTENTION, PENDING SWISS FEDERAL COUNCIL APPROVAL, TO NOTIFY AUSTRIAN AND FINNISH GOVERNMENTS AND THEN TO RELEASE PRESS STATEMENT.

3. WHILE SWISS ASSURED US THAT THEY WOULD BE MOST PLEASED AND HONORED TO HAVE GENEVA BECOME SITE FOR SALT, THEY DWELT AT LENGTH ON DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING APPROPRIATE SPACE FOR US SALT MISSION IN ALREADY OVER-CROWDED GENEVA AREA. DESPITE OUR REPEATED ASSURANCES THAT WE WOULD ENDEAVOR TO BE FLEXIBLE AS REGARDS OUR REQUIREMENTS, SWISS EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT PUBLIC STATEMENT CONCERNING MOVE BEFORE THEY HAD HAD OPPORTUNITY TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBILITIES. CONCERNED ABOUT AUSTRIAN AND FINNISH RECRIMINATIONS, SWISS FEAR EMBARRASSMENT AND RIDICULE IN EVENT THEY AGREED TO MOVE AND THEN FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO MEET EVEN MINIMUM PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS.

4. SWISS POINTED OUT THAT NOT ONLY AGREEMENT BY FEDERAL COUNCIL, BUT ALSO FROM GENEVA CANTONAL GOVERNMENT REQUIRED. THEY UNDERTOOK TO SUBMIT QUESTION TO FEDERAL COUNCIL FOR AUGUST 9 SESSION AND TO TRY TO OBTAIN GENEVA CANTONAL GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT ASAP. THEY WERE UNABLE TO SAY, HOWEVER, HOW QUICKLY LATTER COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. WE REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED URGENCY OF TIMING WITH VIEW TO GROWING POSSIBILITY OF LEAKS AND OBVIOUS SENSITIVITIES OF FINNISH AND AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENTS. SWISS UNDERSTAND PROBLEM AND, WE BELIEVE, WILL DO THEIR BEST. NEVERTHELESS, PROBLEMS WHICH SURFACED IN DISCUSSION MAY DELAY TIMING ENVISAGED REFTEL. GDS.DAVIS

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